

Appl. No. 09/819,225
Amdt. Dated October 10, 2003
Reply to Office Action of July 11, 2003

Attorney Docket No. 81788.0191
Customer No. 26021

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action mailed July 11, 2003, has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are made in response thereto.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,480,640 to Shimonaka et al. Claims 2-18 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By this amendment, claim 1 has been canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Therefore, the outstanding rejection with respect to this claim has been rendered moot. Claims 2 and 15 have been rewritten in independent form to include all of the features of canceled base claim 1. Claims 3, 4, 9 and 13 have been amended to correct minor informalities. These amendments are not made in response to any rejection, but instead to clarify the claims. Claims 5-8, 10-12, 14 and 16-18 remain unchanged. Thus, claims 2-18 are presently pending in this application for consideration.

Applicant respectfully submits that the invention which is the subject matter of rejected claim 1 is patentable over the reference cited by the Examiner. However, in view of the fact that several of the claims contain allowable subject matter, Applicant at this time intend to pursue patent protection for those allowable claims and will consider prosecuting rejected claim 1 in a continuing application. In the meantime, Applicant looks forward to the issuance of a Notice of Allowance with respect to the pending claims.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance and requests early notice to that effect.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at the Los Angeles, CA. telephone number 213-337-6700 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance.

If there are any fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-1314.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date: October 10, 2003

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